

TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN



Written testimony of Ryan Lynch, senior planner and Connecticut coordinator
Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Joint Committee on Transportation

March 11, 2009

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign submits the below written testimony supporting Senate Bill 735, An Act Concerning Bicycle and Pedestrian Access, and House Bill 5640, An Act Concerning the Improvement of Public Access to Transit. The Campaign is a non-profit organization working for a more balanced transportation network in downstate New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

Enacting this legislation is integral to showing ConnDOT that the time is now to change its priorities. Adopting the legislation as written will prove to ConnDOT that comprehensive transportation policy, a policy that includes the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and drivers is needed now.

According to the 2007-2010 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the blueprint for transportation spending in the state, ConnDOT spends **\$0.94 per person** on pedestrian and bike projects, **less than 1%** of total spending listed in the STIP, and almost **\$5.40 less per capita** than neighboring Rhode Island. In contrast, close to **59%** is spent on highway projects.

This is not an isolated incident, but rather a long term problem within an agency that has historically built bigger and wider roads, prioritizing the needs of one set of users; drivers; at the expense of other users, communities and neighborhood development.

While there have been promising indications that ConnDOT is shifting away from this thinking and beginning to think more holistically about transportation policy, there is still great need for improvement. Senate Bill 735 is a good first step towards institutionalizing these promising changes. SB 735 requires that any funds received by ConnDOT or municipality for the construction, resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation or relocation of highways, roads or streets, a reasonable amount is spent on provide facilities for all users, such as bikeways and sidewalks. The legislation also requires that **at least one percent** of these funds be dedicated to bike, pedestrian, and transit access projects and explicitly outlines only three exemptions where complete streets do not have to be implemented; in areas where non-motorized usage is prohibited, where there is a **demonstrated** absence of need and the accommodation of all users would be **excessively expensive to the total project cost**. This language has been drawn

Another example of federal funding being dedicated to bicycle and pedestrian projects can be found in the State of Oregon's 'Bike Bill' which dedicates at least 1% of any Department of Transportation funds to bike and pedestrian projects. A copy of this legislation is also included.

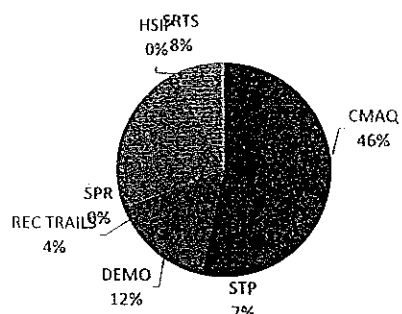
These are only two of the many examples throughout the country where federal dollars like CMAQ and HSIP have been utilized to fund bicycle and pedestrian projects. Utilizing these types of funding for effective congestion mitigating measures is not radical, but rather the norm. Connecticut is simply behind the curve. Several photos of bike and pedestrian projects funded by CMAQ funds from throughout the country are also included at the end of this testimony. More examples can be found here:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cmaqpgs/viewphotos/index.cfm?cat=ALL&city=ALL&proj=ALL&search=&submit=Submit>

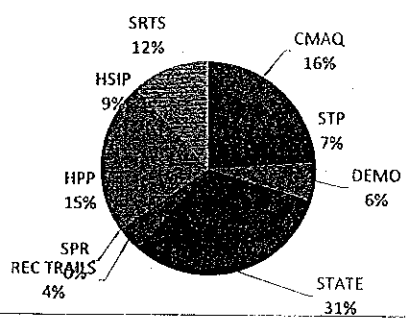
This legislation comes at an ideal time to invest in the State's pedestrian, bicycle and transit infrastructure. In the current recession, we need to look for investments that will yield the biggest bang for the buck. These types of investments do just this. They come at very low costs but generate great benefits for the economy, environment and the public's health.

The legislation is also ideal because it does not call for more funding, simply asking for ConnDOT to spend funds in a slightly different way. It is long overdue. We request your support.

FY 2007 Source of Bike/Ped Funding



FY 2008 Source of Bike/Ped Funding



366.514 Use of highway fund for footpaths and bicycle trails. (1) Out of the funds received by the Department of Transportation or by any county or city from the State Highway Fund reasonable amounts shall be expended as necessary to provide footpaths and bicycle trails, including curb cuts or ramps as part of the project. Footpaths and bicycle trails, including curb cuts or ramps as part of the project, shall be provided wherever a highway, road or street is being constructed, reconstructed or relocated. Funds received from the State Highway Fund may also be expended to maintain footpaths and trails and to provide footpaths and trails along other highways, roads and streets.

(2) Footpaths and trails are not required to be established under subsection (1) of this section:

(a) Where the establishment of such paths and trails would be contrary to public safety;

(b) If the cost of establishing such paths and trails would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use; or

(c) Where sparsity of population, other available ways or other factors indicate an absence of any need for such paths and trails.

(3) The amount expended by the department or by a city or county as required or permitted by this section shall never in any one fiscal year be less than one percent of the total amount of the funds received from the highway fund. However:

(a) This subsection does not apply to a city in any year in which the one percent equals \$250 or less, or to a county in any year in which the one percent equals \$1,500 or less.

(b) A city or county in lieu of expending the funds each year may credit the funds to a financial reserve fund in accordance with ORS 294.525, to be held for not more than 10 years, and to be expended for the purposes required or permitted by this section.

(c) For purposes of computing amounts expended during a fiscal year under this subsection, the department, a city or county may record the money as expended:

(A) On the date actual construction of the facility is commenced if the facility is constructed by the city, county or department itself; or

(B) On the date a contract for the construction of the facilities is entered with a private contractor or with any other governmental body.

(4) For the purposes of this chapter, the establishment of paths, trails and curb cuts or ramps and the expenditure of funds as authorized by this section are for highway, road and street purposes. The department shall, when requested, provide technical assistance and advice to cities and counties in carrying out the purpose of this section. The department shall recommend construction standards for footpaths and bicycle trails. Curb cuts or ramps shall comply with the requirements of ORS 447.310 and rules adopted under ORS 447.231. The department shall, in the manner prescribed for marking highways under ORS 810.200, provide a uniform system of signing footpaths and bicycle trails which shall apply to paths and trails under the jurisdiction of the department and cities and counties. The department and cities and counties may restrict the use of footpaths and bicycle trails under their respective jurisdictions to pedestrians and nonmotorized vehicles, except that motorized wheelchairs shall be allowed to use footpaths and bicycle trails.

(5) As used in this section, "bicycle trail" means a publicly owned and maintained lane or way designated and signed for use as a bicycle route. [1971 c.376 §2; 1979 c.825 §1; 1983 c.19 §1; 1983 c.338 §919; 1991 c.417 §7; 1993 c.503 §12; 1997 c.308 §36; 2001 c.389 §1]